

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 10 are currently amended. Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments herein are fully supported by the Specification as originally filed and do not introduce new matter.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 3-9, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hawkins (U.S. Patent No. 5,971,444). Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claim 1, as currently amended, includes a coupling having a male-end region adjacent a second end adapted to be received within a fitting or a pipe for bonding thereto. The Examiner has identified a nipple 22 extending from a first side of an annular flange 20 of Hawkins as a male-end region adjacent a second end adapted to be received within a fitting or a pipe. The nipple 22 has inside diameter that is preferably sized for receipt of a section 38 (see Figures 1-3 and column 3, lines 19-22). Moreover, there is no indication in Hawkins of any intent of receiving nipple 22 in a fitting or a pipe. Applicant contends that the ribs on an exterior of nipple 22 and extending nearly an end of nipple 22 preclude nipple 22 from being sufficiently received within a fitting or a pipe for bonding thereto. Applicant further contends that the end of nipple 22 would have to extend beyond the ribs by at least as much as section 38 extends into nipple 22 to facilitate bonding, as is intended by claim 1. Therefore, Hawkins does not include each and every recitation of claim 1, so claim 1 should be allowed.

Claims 3-9 depend from claim 1 and are thus allowable for at least the same reason as claim 1. Therefore, claims 3-9 should be allowed.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2 and 10-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hawkins in view of Jones (U.S. Patent No. 2,554,622). Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claim 1, as currently amended, is patentably distinct from Hawkins. Moreover, Hawkins in combination with Jones fails to overcome the deficiencies of Hawkins with respect to claim 1. That is, Hawkins in combination with Jones does not include or suggest a coupling having a male-end region adjacent a second end adapted to be received within a fitting or a pipe for bonding thereto, as claim 1. Therefore, claim 1 is allowable over Hawkins in view of Jones.

Claim 2 depends from claim 1 and is thus allowable for at least the same reason as claim 1.

Therefore, claim 2 is allowable over Hawkins in view of Jones.

Claim 10, as currently amended, includes a male-end region adjacent a second end adapted to be received within a fitting or a pipe for bonding thereto. The Examiner has identified a nipple 22 extending from a first side of an annular flange 20 of Hawkins as a male-end region adjacent a second end adapted to be received within a fitting or a pipe. The nipple 22 has inside diameter that is preferably sized for receipt of a section 38 (see Figures 1-3 and column 3, lines 19-22). Moreover, there is no indication in Hawkins of any intent of receiving nipple 22 in a fitting or a pipe. Applicant contends that the ribs on an exterior of nipple 22 and extending nearly an end of nipple 22 preclude nipple 22 from being sufficiently received within a fitting or a pipe for bonding thereto. Applicant further contends that the end of nipple 22 would have to extend beyond the ribs by at least as much as section 38 extends into nipple 22 to facilitate bonding, as is intended by claim 10. Moreover, Hawkins in combination with Jones fails to overcome the deficiencies of Hawkins with respect to claim 10. Therefore, claim 10 is allowable over Hawkins in view of Jones.

Claims 11-13 depend from claim 10 and thus are allowable for at least the same reason claim 10. Therefore, claims 11-13 should be allowed.

Claims 14 and 20 each include threading a nut of a tank fitting on external threads of a coupling of the tank fitting so that the nut engages an exterior surface of a tank so as to squeeze a gasket between a flange of the coupling and the interior surface of the tank so that the gasket forms a liquid-tight seal around a hole in the tank between the tank and the flange.

Hawkins does not include threading a nut of a tank fitting on external threads of a coupling of the tank fitting so that the nut engages an exterior surface of a tank so as to squeeze a gasket between a flange of the coupling and the interior surface of the tank, as in each of claims 14 and 20. Rather Hawkins threads a female member (a nut) 14 on external threads 26 of a male member 12 so that female member engages a second seal 18 (not an exterior surface of a tank, as in each of claims 14 and 20) to slightly compress a first seal 16 between a flange 20 of male member 20 and an exterior of a wall 40 (see Figure 3 and column 3, lines 7-16). Further, the Examiner contends since Hawkins indicated that second seal 18 can be a nylon washer, O-ring, or another suitable sealing material, second seal 18 can be an adhesive that can be considered a part of the tank (wall 40). Applicant contends that an adhesive is separate from wall 40 and

would be added to wall 40, and therefore cannot be considered part of wall 40. Furthermore, the added adhesive and would prevent the female member 14 from engaging wall 40. Also, it is questionable as to whether an adhesive is a suitable seal as intended by Hawkins in that the examples of suitable seals (nylon washer, O-ring) given in Hawkins are fundamentally different from an adhesive because an adhesive would adhere female member 14 to wall 40, whereas Hawkins's exemplary seals would not.

Moreover, Hawkins in combination with Jones fails to overcome the deficiencies of Hawkins with respect to each of claims 14 and 20. That is, Hawkins in combination with Jones does not include or suggest threading a nut of a tank fitting on external threads of a coupling of the tank fitting so that the nut engages an exterior surface of a tank so as to squeeze a gasket between a flange of the coupling and the interior surface of the tank, as in each of claims 14 and 20. Therefore, claims 14 and 20 are allowable over Hawkins in view of Jones.

Claims 15-19 depend from claim 14 and thus are allowable for at least the same reason as claim 14. Claims 21-27 depend from claim 20 and thus are allowable for at least the same reason as claim 20. Therefore, claims 15-19 and claims 21-27 should be allowed.

Information Disclosure Statement

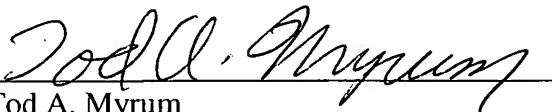
In the non-final Office Action mailed June 16, 2004, the Examiner indicated that the Norwesco, Inc. reference listed on the 1449 Form filed with the present application on September 24, 2003 was not considered because the Examiner was unable to see the details of the reference. Applicant submitted the original of the copy of the Norwesco, Inc. reference in the response (dated September 16, 2004) to the non-final Office Action mailed June 16, 2004. However, the Examiner has not acknowledged whether the original of the copy of the Norwesco, Inc. reference has been considered, nor has the Examiner sent Applicant an initialed copy of the 1449 Form filed with the present application on September 24, 2003. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner indicate whether the original of the copy of the Norwesco, Inc. reference has been considered and to send Applicant an initialed copy of the 1449 Form filed with the present application on September 24, 2003.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and requests reconsideration of the application and allowance of claims. If the Examiner has any questions or concerns regarding this application, please contact the undersigned at (612) 312-2208.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 01-26-05


Tod A. Myrum
Reg. No. 42,922

Attorneys for Applicant
Leffert Jay & Polglaze
P.O. Box 581009
Minneapolis, MN 55458-1009
T 612 312-2200
F 612 312-2250